

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Thursday, June 13, 1991**

2:30 p.m.

Date: 91/06/13

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head:

Prayers

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

We give thanks to God for the rich heritage of this province as found in our people.

We pray that native-born Albertans and those who have come from other places may continue to work together to preserve and to enlarge the precious heritage called Alberta.

Amen.

head:

Presenting Petitions

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table a short but I think very important petition signed by 22 individuals protesting the upcoming foreign travels of the Premier and his wife and assistant and aide to the show biz and high-class shopping capitals of the world.

head:

Tabling Returns and Reports

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table the annual report of the Alberta Automobile Insurance Board for the year ended December 31, 1990.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the annual reports for 1989-90 for both Red Deer College and the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table with the House a review of approaches for setting acidic deposition limits in Alberta.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table in the House the articles of association of the Alberta Wildlife Park Foundation, particularly article 49, which, contrary to the minister on June 11, says: "Notwithstanding anything to the contrary . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. [interjection] Thank you. [interjection] Thank you for the tabling.

MR. TAYLOR: I think the minister would . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Thank you.

head:

Introduction of Special Guests

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Stony Plain.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very honoured and pleased to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly 20 bright, grade 6 students from the Stony Plain elementary school who are here to enhance their knowledge about our Legislature. They are accompanied by their teacher Mr. Milton Mellott and parents Mr. George Perras, Mrs. Marion Perras, and Mr. Glenn Hollands. I'd ask them all to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Also in our galleries this afternoon is a group of students from Sir John Franklin junior high school in the Calgary-Mountain View constituency. There are nearly 50 of them here to watch the Legislature in action. They're accompanied by their principal, Mr. Gerry Smith, and teachers Mrs. Lake and Mr. Kwasny. I'd like it if they would please rise, and I'd ask all the members in the Assembly to give them a warm welcome to the Legislature.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Cardston, followed by Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to introduce to you and to the Assembly today 14 students from the Hillspring school, which is the community I lived in for 10 years prior to coming here. They're seated in the members' gallery, and they're accompanied by Mr. Thaine Olsen, their principal, and supervisors Mr. and Mrs. Lewis. I'd ask them to stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Westlock-Sturgeon, followed by Dunvegan, followed by Clover Bar.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the House two proud parents sitting in your gallery. They are Jack and Joyce Stevens, who are the proud parents of one of our pages, Jacki Stevens. I'd like them to rise and get the welcome of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Dunvegan.

MR. CLEGG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure today for me to introduce to you and through you 14 grade 7 and 8 students from the Woking school in the Spirit River school division in the wonderful constituency of Dunvegan. They are accompanied today by their teacher Kathy Rowe and parents David Rowe, Gordon Hardy, Janet Palser, and Mr. Richard Birley. They are seated in the members' gallery, and I'd ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Clover Bar.

MR. GESELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to introduce this afternoon two visitors from Brighton, Ontario: Alvin and Alice Wanner. They're hosted by Susie and Wayne Wanner from Fort Saskatchewan. They're seated in the members' gallery. I would ask our guests to rise, and I would ask the members to extend a warm welcome.

MR. SPEAKER: Redwater-Andrew.

MR. ZARUSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to introduce two constituents: Mr. and Mrs. Grant Comfort from Thorhild. They are meeting today with Environment on certain water well drilling regulations. Mr. Comfort is a water well driller. They're seated in the members' gallery. I ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

head:

Oral Question Period

Premier's Trade Mission

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier, the man who wants to meet the Queen. It's not surprising that the same

Premier who wants to hobnob with monarchs couldn't give a royal hoot about letting taxpayers, or should I say his subjects, know what they're going to get for their money. I have news for the Premier: the taxpayers of Alberta are not amused. The Premier's little Napoleon complex would be entertaining if it was not so offensive. What this Premier is saying to the taxpayers of Alberta is that even though they are paying for this mission, the Premier doesn't think they have a right to know exactly where he's meeting, exactly who he's meeting, exactly what he's going to meet about, and exactly how much the trip is going to cost. My question to the Premier. I want to give the Premier one more chance to shed his imperial arrogance and admit that he's made a mistake, to do the right thing and agree to immediately release full answers to these questions; in other words, to give a complete itinerary of his upcoming trip to the people of Alberta.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it is, I guess, disappointing in one way that the hon. member would joke about Her Majesty in the Legislature. [interjections] Well, I feel very strongly about Her Majesty and how Albertans love and admire her and feel tremendously loyal to her. I would be surprised if . . . [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling Reflections on the Royal Family

MR. SPEAKER: Forgive me, please. Order. [interjections] Order. There are sufficient citations that relate to the matter of reflections upon the royal family, and while the . . . [interjections] Perhaps you'd be good enough to allow me to continue? [interjections] Would you be good enough to allow me to continue, to finish my sentence?

2:40

The rest of the sentence I was about to utter was the fact that the introduction, in spite of the attempt at humour, at least did not go beyond the bounds in terms of making any kind of attack upon the royal family. However, the Premier should be able to make his case without being shouted down. [interjections] That's right, hon. member. It's wasting your time in question period.

Perhaps you'd be good enough to take a look at Standing Order 23(k), and I'm certain that the rest of the comments . . . [interjections]

The hon. the Premier.

Premier's Trade Mission (continued)

MR. GETTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll just say again how strongly Albertans feel about Her Majesty and respect, admire, love her, and are very loyal to her.

Mr. Speaker, I must say that there is no way that the hon. Leader of the Opposition can point at this trip in any way as being secret, because, as you recall, over a week ago I issued a press release describing the visit. It described the days when I will be there. I then held a press conference describing the visit. I then dealt with the matter twice in the Assembly, and as a matter of fact, the matter was raised by the government side. So I find it in a way sad but in a way laughable, too, that the opposition, in these days when there are important issues, finds nothing more to talk about than this, and that means that things are pretty darn good in Alberta.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, good government and accountability and doing things in the open are important to the people of Alberta. This Premier better understand that. The laughable thing is that you're the one that wants to talk to the Queen. We all respect her. It's you we don't respect because of this action.

I guess the Conservative's economic theory is not the only thing that's locked into the 18th century. Their notion of accountability and openness also seems to spring from that period. I want to stress again that people are fed up with this secret government that refuses to be accountable. Seeing that the Premier has refused to release an itinerary, would he at least release information that Albertans have a right to know? Will he do this: will he at least agree to provide a full written report of his trip to Albertans within 60 days of his return so that Albertans can see what they've got for their money?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I come back to say that this trip is not secret. I have discussed in this Legislature, discussed by press release, and discussed in a press conference the objectives of the trip, the classifications and positions of the people I'll be meeting with. I've talked about the hopes that we are able to establish over there. Finally, I would like to be able to report to the House upon my return, immediately upon my return, and certainly, as has always happened in the past, have a meeting with the media to tell them of the results of the trip. It's nothing to do with 60 days. I would do it.

Again, I have talked about it in the press release, in a press conference, and twice in the Legislature, describing the aims, the objectives, the classifications, the organizations I'll be meeting with and the fact that I will be able to promote our farmers and ranchers. I've been sent material by Calgary, their economic development, Edmonton, investments across Alberta. These are all very, very positive things, Mr. Speaker, that I'll be trying to accomplish.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, if it's all so positive, I would think that the Premier would want to tell us who he is meeting with, where he is meeting, what he is trying to accomplish. That's what they do in other provinces. They lay out an itinerary.

My question to the Premier: why are you so afraid of doing this? Are Albertans going to see that this trip is basically a farce? Is that why you're not doing it?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I almost shouldn't dignify those kinds of comments with an answer. Many members of this Assembly travel. They don't file itineraries in advance nor do they report upon their return. As I recall, the hon. Leader of the Opposition traveled at taxpayers' expense. I had no idea of his itinerary, no report on what he did. That's fine, his going. He said what his objective was, and we take for granted that he tried to fulfill his objective. I have no concerns about that. That's why I think it is kind of a sad issue when we find that the opposition have nothing better to talk about.

MR. SPEAKER: Second main question, Leader of the Opposition.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'll give him any itinerary he wants anytime. We're not afraid.

I'd like to designate my second question to the Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

Conflict of Interest Legislation

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, the government's proposed Conflicts of Interest Act is another example, I think, of this government's deep fear of public scrutiny. Currently under law the public has the right when they perceive a conflict of interest with respect to an MLA to take that matter to a court, the Court of Queen's Bench. That right is now being removed and being replaced with a policy whereby the ethics commissioner makes a verdict on a complaint and it comes to the Assembly, where the verdict can be overturned by the majority. Talk about a half a loaf Bill if ever we've seen one. Worse still, on matters involving contracts or illegal payments, the two sections that are specifically being removed from the current Act, the matter would die again because citizens now would have no right of appeal. I'd like to ask the minister sponsoring this legislation, the Attorney General, why the government has substituted judgment about politicians by politicians instead of having the judgment be able to go to the courts.

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, we look forward to the debate on that issue in the House. The thrust was to put an ethics commissioner in place, an officer of this Assembly. This Assembly is the highest court in this province, and anything that comes before the commissioner will be on the basis of a public inquiry. The inquiry that isn't public is on matters that are nonessential, not of great consequence; otherwise, there would be full public inquiry. The recommendation by the ethics commissioner would be made to this Assembly with a recommended sanction. There's a list of sanctions. I would defy the hon. member to think that anybody in this Assembly, if a matter came from the ethics commissioner with a recommendation of sanction, would not comply with that sanction or perhaps even a more serious one and in the Assembly where it should be done.

2:50

MS BARRETT: Well, that's interesting, Mr. Speaker, but let me connect the dots for the minister. If you have a provision in the legislation which allows politicians to overturn the decision of the commissioner, then you've got to explain it somehow. If it's not necessary, why is the provision in the legislation and why won't the minister take that provision out of the legislation?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, again, I make no apology for the Assembly being the highest court in the land. It is wide open to the public. I would defy the logic of the member that in such a serious matter as a conflict of one of the members in this Assembly, with a recommendation by an officer of the Assembly, that would, when it's open to full debate, be overturned. Second to that, I would remind the hon. member that even in our current Leg. Assembly Act, anything that the court would recommend could be overturned by this Assembly, if they so wished, when it pertains to a member of this Assembly.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, government members have further cushioned themselves by making sure that even the commissioner now can't take matters of conflict of interest to the courts. I'd like to ask the minister why it is that this legislation has been drafted with such political loopholes that you could drive the proverbial mack truck through them. Why won't he insist that politicians not be the last people to judge whether or not politicians have breached the law?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the Conflicts of Interest Act was brought in to assure people that they would have full disclosure by every member of this Assembly and a full observation of our carryings on. If anybody, not only a member in here but any member of the public, has a question that one of us is in conflict, they can go to the commissioner and, after a full public inquiry, have that recommendation debated fully in here and decided in here.

I think the hon. member again, from reading her script, was missing the point of my last remark. No matter what, even under our current Act, the Court of Queen's Bench decided, this Assembly can overrule. So why have it go to the court first? Have this the court. Have your day to make your accusations and debate the accusations and debate the recommendations of the ethics commissioner right here in this Assembly by the people who are elected by the people of Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Glengarry on behalf on the Liberal Party.

Premier's Trade Mission

(continued)

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the hon. Premier. Unfortunately, the European junket has created a credibility gap for the Premier and the citizens of Alberta. Albertans don't know whether this is a personal trip, whether this is a part personal trip and working trip. They don't know what the benefits are that will accrue to Albertans economically. I think they're entitled to make those conclusions when the Premier doesn't come clean, when he doesn't give the details and continues to be secretive. My first question to the Premier is this. I'd like to give the Premier the benefit of the doubt. Presumably he thinks that somebody may get hurt by disclosing who it is he's going to meet and when he's going to meet them. I'd like the Premier to explain how on earth he takes this position, how he justifies this position of believing somebody could get hurt.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I don't try and guess at the hon. member's presumptions. He can presume anything he wants. What I have said to the Assembly, what I have said to the people of Alberta, what I have put out in a press release is the days we are going, the countries we're going to, the cities we're going to, the classifications and positions of the people I'm meeting with, and then I've told them the subjects that we'll be discussing and the objectives of the trip.

Now I have to come back that this is really starting to get pretty ridiculous when we have both leaders of the opposition parties making this their number one issue in Alberta. If that's all they've got to talk about, Alberta is pretty good these days.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, it's the Premier that has made this the issue. It's the Premier that is not telling us the truth or allowing us . . . [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling Parliamentary Language

MR. SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order. I'm sure the hon. member was getting caught up in the excitement of the issue and would like to withdraw the line: the Premier is not telling the truth.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the observation that the Premier isn't telling the truth. He's being secretive, he's not giving Albertans the facts, and Albertans are entitled to draw these conclusions.

Premier's Trade Mission

(continued)

MR. DECORE: My second question to the Premier is this. It is a requirement that when members of this Assembly go off on taxpayers' business, as I did last summer to a parliamentary conference in Fredericton – and that itinerary is a matter of public record – they come back and they file a complete report with the Speaker. Are you prepared to do the same thing, Mr. Premier?

MR. GETTY: Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, I want to deal again with the allegation. This is absolutely not a secretive trip. I have just again explained it to the House, and I've talked to the people of Alberta both through the media and through media releases about where I am going, the days I am going, the subjects I'll be discussing, the classifications of the people that I'll be meeting with, the organizations they represent, and the objectives of the trip. That is not a secret mission, and one of the sad things is to see it being distorted that way. It's really strange and sad.

Now, in terms of reporting on the trip: absolutely. I mean, my absolute priority is to go there, try and achieve the objectives that I've laid out here, and then report on them. I would be doing it immediately upon returning, either to the Legislature or to Alberta, whatever opportunity is provided to me.

Then this idea that somehow the dollars aren't accounted for is straight nonsense as well, because every dollar that's spent comes into this Legislature and is laid out for the people of Alberta or their elected representatives to scrutinize. How in the world there can be anything hidden about this, I don't know, and I think it's a highly exaggerated tilting at windmills. Really they should get onto something important.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I am entitled to conclude, as other Albertans are concluding, that this is a high squandering of taxpayers' money; that's what it is. When the Premier's office was first asked by the media for an itinerary, he said it was personal. When our offices asked who was going, we couldn't get that information. Why is that so secretive?

My last question to the Premier is this. We're now debating disclosure legislation in this House. Why be such a hypocrite, Mr. Premier, and have that kind of legislation go forward for complete disclosure . . .

Speaker's Ruling Parliamentary Language Criticizing the Speaker

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Order. [interjections] Order. I'm sure once again the member in great excitement and enthusiasm would also like to withdraw his statement "hypocrite," please.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, there's no enthusiasm or excitement. I want to know the facts. I want to know the truth.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. [interjection] Order. Take your place. [interjection] Take your place.

MR. DECORE: Let's get some answers in this House. Do your job properly, Mr. Speaker. Be fair. Be fair.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, hon. member. I guess we proved the point about your excitement.

This is in the interest of fairness to all members in the House as well as to the parliamentary process. First, will you be good enough to stand and retrieve the word "hypocrite" that you used. Secondly, you might give some thought to your comment shouted at the Chair, and then perhaps we'll get on to your last question.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I don't intend malice to you or to the Premier. All I want is that there be answers to questions that are put. You come down heavily on members of the opposition but never, never on the government.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. Take your place. [interjection] Take your place. It's a simple course of action. You withdraw, or you do not withdraw. You then apologize to the Chair, or you do not apologize. Then we'll see whether or not you get to your last question. Got it?

3:00

MR. DECORE: It's just been brought to my attention that this is a parliamentary term, not an unparliamentary term, but I'm going to withdraw it anyway, just to suit you, Mr. Speaker. I just ask again that you be fair in the way you deal with people in this Assembly. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The rulings in the Alberta House: there's this extra section, and under there the term has been ruled out of order, hon. member. The citation will be given to me, I'm sure, in just a few moments. However, I will now take it that you have somewhat reluctantly withdrawn the term.

MR. DECORE: I withdrew it. It's not unparliamentary, but for your benefit, Mr. Speaker, I withdrew it.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

As for your comments about the Chair, I'll have to just keep them under consideration and examine the Blues.

Now, perhaps you'd like to ask your last, succinct supplementary.

Premier's Trade Mission

(continued)

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I don't want to take more liberty than I'm entitled to. I just very simply, very quietly, very calmly asked the Speaker to direct that the Premier give us the facts, the details, the benefits to Albertans, not some airy-fairy, wishy-washy explanation like he's given. Give us the details. File them in this Assembly, and if not, tell us why not.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I won't reflect on the hon. member's conduct with regard to his disappointing relationship regarding the Chair.

MR. MARTIN: It's not up to you.

MR. GETTY: Well, I'm a member of this Legislature, and I

don't want members of this Legislature attacking and showing a lack of respect for the Chair.

Now, as I've told the Assembly and as I've told the public, I've said the objectives of the trip. I've talked about the subjects that will be discussed. I've talked about the people I will be meeting with. I pointed out how important the trip is to the cities of Edmonton and Calgary with the information they've provided to us. Investment and trade: I expect, Mr. Speaker, that we'll be able to do very positive things in that regard. I've said before: look across Canada these days. Where is the place to invest? Alberta is a shining beacon.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about, as I've said, the people I'll be talking to. I've said I'd be talking to government leaders responsible for energy. I've said I'd be speaking with the Canada high commissioner, a cross section of U.K. businessmen and political leaders . . .

MR. WICKMAN: Name names.

MR. DECORE: Who? When? Where? On what?

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MR. GETTY: . . . experts on oil and economic issues, the OECD, the Canadian ambassador to France.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. Premier. The noise level makes one wonder about whether answers really want to be received.

Speaker's Ruling Parliamentary Language

MR. SPEAKER: For the benefit of the Member for Edmonton-Glenarry, the expressions ruled unparliamentary by Speakers and Chairmen of the Alberta Legislative Assembly . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Why are you doing this in question period?

MR. SPEAKER: . . . from 1905 to 1991, and this is up to June 10 of this year: the words "hypocrites," "hypocritical" when applied to individuals have been ruled out of order. That occurred on June 8, '87, again March 18, 1991, as well as today.

The matter is dealt with at this time in question period because of the sufficient amount of disorder in the House.

Red Deer-North.

Premier's Trade Mission (continued)

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll try and keep my preamble brief. In my experience here in the Assembly, I've been stung a number of times by the Speaker's rebuke when my preamble is too long, so I'll try and get right to the point.

I've discovered a deep, dark secret about the Premier's trip, and I discovered it by following his public comments. I've stumbled upon the secret that he's going to be in New York, one of the areas of destination, and I'm wondering: aside from meeting with members of the investment community there, will the Premier be receiving any kind of update in terms of the progress of the free trade discussions which are including Mexico that will be of information to us upon his return?

MR. GETTY: I will be meeting with the Canadian consul general. I will be meeting with people who wish to sell Alberta natural gas into the United States, pipelines proposals. I will be meeting with First Boston, Merrill Lynch, Morgan Stanley, J.P. Morgan bank. There will be a reception held which will include business leaders of New York from the financial and investment communities. We are there, Mr. Speaker, promoting Alberta, and it's so important now. [interjections]

I know the hon. member's don't like the idea of promoting Alberta. They would build a little fence around Alberta. They wouldn't care about jobs, and they wouldn't care about investment, and they wouldn't care about trade. The reason we have the best economy in Canada is because we do care. We care about jobs. We care about investments. We're the reason that in this last month in every province in Canada retail sales dropped, a huge slump, except for one province. Which one? Alberta.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, it's astounding that as the Premier gives minute details of where he's going, who he's meeting with, and why, we get shrieks and derision from the opposition.

I wonder if the Premier could tell us . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: You might as well sit down for a while.
Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, while the Premier is in Europe, I would like to know: because of the fact that the agricultural community worldwide is really threatened with a degree of devastation because of the subsidy levels in the European community, will the Premier be involved in discussions? Has he received any information even to date that might give some glimmer of hope to farmers in Alberta and western Canada that there might be a crack in the European armour regarding their position on GATT and the subsidies? Will he be having any input on that issue while he's there?

MR. GETTY: That's exactly as I told members of the opposition. We are going to try and establish whether we're making any successful inroads in agricultural reform, because we know how important it is to Alberta's farmers and ranchers. We know the federal government through the GATT negotiations will be and has been trying to make a breakthrough in convincing the European Economic Community and the United States to move out of agricultural subsidies. Now, Mr. Speaker, this is so important to the farmers and ranchers of this province that it's exactly one of the things I'll be stressing on this visit. As I told the House and as I've told the public, it's one of the things we must continue to impress upon the people in the United Kingdom and in Europe and in the United States. It has such a tremendous impact in a province that produces so much more than we use. We must have markets, and they must be markets on a level playing field. So we definitely will be pursuing that, and as chairman of the agricultural committee of our cabinet, I will be representing our farmers and ranchers there.

3:10

Aids to Daily Living Program

MS MJOLSNESS: Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the Minister of Health. We are hearing from parents of children with handicaps from all over the province who are indicating to us that they will be unable to cope with cuts to the Aids to Daily Living program. It may cost some of these families up to \$2,000

to \$3,000 to pay for these cuts. One major concern is the limit set for diapers. Though many of these parents have a concern for the environment, they have indicated for many reasons that reusable diapers are not a feasible option. To the minister: given that these families deserve the support of this government in caring for their children with handicaps, how can the minister justify the withdrawal of these services from the Aids to Daily Living program which are hurting these families?

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, we certainly haven't withdrawn incontinence supplies. In fact, we have provided a change that will give \$400 worth of incontinence supplies per person to individuals across the province. Interestingly, about 70 percent of our Aids to Daily Living clients used \$400 or less worth of incontinence supplies last year. We are certainly not withdrawing those supplies from the AADL list.

MS MJOLSNESS: Mr. Speaker, many of these families are going to have to pay additional costs over and above the \$400 that they're allowed, and many of these families are now considering institutionalizing their children. As a matter of fact, this morning one family has unfortunately made that decision because of these cuts. I would ask the minister: will the minister now rescind these cuts in light of the fact that it is causing hardship on these families and start supporting families so that children can be kept at home?

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, certainly the intent is to support at home the people who need the support the most. That's why the gradation in the Aids to Daily Living program is: cost share the first \$500 of benefit on a 75-25 basis, with the province paying 75, and then those people who are using more and more of those kinds of supplies beyond the \$500 are to be fully covered by the province.

In view of the circumstances the member has raised, I think it's important that I point out the kinds of appeal processes that are available under the Aids to Daily Living program. These appeal processes have been in place for some time, but obviously with the changes that we're making in the program this year, I think we sometimes forget and perhaps clients of the program have forgotten the appeals that are in place. The first appeal that is in place is with respect to the portion that is cost shared. If an individual or a family with a child is unable to afford the cost sharing, there is an appeal to the local Aids to Daily Living appeal committee of the cost-share portion. There is another appeal mechanism. The other appeal mechanism is to have a client request that the additional benefits they need beyond those that may have been limited by number could be appealed to the AADL program panel, which is, of course, medically reviewed. This review would assess individuals' needs based on special medical circumstances, special personal circumstances, whatever they may be, or special financial circumstances to allow beyond the normal limit that's provided in the program.

I thank the hon. member for giving me an opportunity to explain to parents and to people across the province that the appeal mechanisms are in place, and certainly if those special medical circumstances exist, I invite, in fact I would encourage those families to contact that appeal mechanism.

MR. SPEAKER: Westlock-Sturgeon.

Alberta Wildlife Park

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Recreation and Parks. It is clear from published reports as well as personal communications that the

Enoch band does not have the money to relocate the Alberta Wildlife Park or cover any deficits that may occur at least for the first half dozen years of operation. Since the Minister of Recreation and Parks reached the rather dubious conclusion of letting his little clique of government supporters and a Tory campaign organizer, called the Wildlife Park Foundation, reach the equally dubious decision of transferring the park to the Enoch band, I would like to ask: why does this minister and also the minister of the constituency next door, the Solicitor General, consistently refuse to meet the native leaders in spite of their request to discuss the question of where they can find \$4 million to \$8 million to relocate the park?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, the entire question that was just put before this Assembly is based on supposition that is taken from outside of any facts that were presented to this minister. Therefore, I cannot answer any further.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, it's not a surprise that he cannot answer. He cannot answer them with suppositions, without suppositions, before suppositions, and after suppositions. He's probably one of the most incompetent ministers we've had for some time over there.

Would the minister then at least agree to meet the Indian chiefs and council, which they have asked to do, to discuss the questions of relocation and financing? The minister preferably with the Solicitor General accompanying him, because then we might get a straight report.

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, the foundation has been dealing on the proposals that have been brought forward, and they selected the Enoch proposal. They have met on a regular basis with the band, and if the band approaches us on an open basis, which they haven't at the present time, they'll have the same right as any other group or citizen of Alberta to meet with this government. Therefore, the answer to his question is yes.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Highwood.

Highwood River

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of the Environment. Residents along or near the Highwood River have taken comfort from the minister's assurances that he would not let the river suffer because of water withdrawals to Mosquito Creek and the Little Bow River. However, the current Water Resources Act addresses the allocation of water and water rights to those holding licences. My question to the minister: will a natural-state licence for the Highwood River guarantee that the health of the river stands first in line when water shortages occur?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, a natural-state licence can be applied to some rivers. Normally it's the kind of licence that's applied to a river that is in its natural state and hasn't been heavily impacted. In the case of the Highwood River it's a very difficult situation. There are numerous ranchers and other people involved in the agriculture business upstream and downstream who have licences to draw water. In addition to that, there are a number of irrigating farmers along the Little Bow system who have licences to draw water for agricultural purposes. We've got to find a way to reach a compromise, to put in the kind of situation that hopefully will allow us to use the tremendous flush that usually comes down in the spring,

capture that flush, store that water, and thereby ensure that the Highwood will have a proper inflow requirement, an inflow need, and that the irrigating farmers will be looked after as well.

MR. SPEAKER: Highwood.

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My supplemental question is again to the Minister of the Environment. Given what you said, will you still grant the residents of the Highwood River area a natural-state licence?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, the application has been made by some individuals and groups representing individuals. That application is under review. As I said before, it's a very difficult thing to do, because the river has already been heavily impacted and there are responsibilities to people who have valid licences to draw water. [interjections] And you know it.

MR. TAYLOR: Tell them if they want water to move to Stettler. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: No, no, hon. member. Sorry. [interjections] No. Just a moment, please. I'm sorry.

Now, Edmonton-Kingsway.

3:20

Free Trade

MR. McEACHERN: Yesterday the trade ministers of Canada, the United States, and Mexico kicked off negotiations for a three-way trade deal between the three countries, a deal that nobody in Alberta much wants except the Deputy Premier and the leader of the Liberal Party, waving his hand over here. By doing this deal, the federal Conservatives will compound the misery and economic disaster inflicted on Canadians by the Mulroney trade deal with the United States. To the Premier: given that the federal Conservatives have already announced that Mexico's low wages, appalling working conditions, and nonexistent environmental standards will not be on the table, how can the Premier justify blindly following Brian Mulroney and Michael Wilson into this trade deal with absolutely no safeguards for the working families of Alberta? Why is there no social charter as there is in Europe?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, we will be getting the full reports on the trade negotiations, so I don't want to speculate, as the hon. member is.

MR. McEACHERN: Speculation? It's been very clear that there isn't going to be.

The Mulroney trade deal with the United States promised jobs, jobs, jobs. We've just lost over 300,000 jobs in the last two and a half years since that deal came in, mostly the result of large corporations packing up and leaving for the United States and Mexico. In the three-way trade deal proposed, this trend will intensify unless safeguards are built in to protect Canadian workers and their jobs and their wages. To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade this time: given the failure of this government's economic strategy, which has amounted to nothing more than throwing taxpayers' dollars at losing companies, what can this minister do to assure Albertans that their wages and social programs will not be deteriorated further to the Mexican level by this trade deal?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, let me first deal with the suggestion by the hon. member that the free trade deal has had a negative impact. That is contrary to what a number of third-party analyses have indicated. A number of third-party analyses have indicated that it has had a very positive impact on both our province and our country. They have suggested that Canada has posted a \$4 billion net increase in exports of manufactured end products in 1990 compared to 1988. Capital investment and investment flows have also been positive. It also suggests that claims related to plant closings and job layoffs have been inaccurate and misrepresented, such as the hon. member is doing right now.

MR. MARTIN: Who said?

MR. ELZINGA: That has been substantiated by the Canada West Foundation, and a number of other organizations have also suggested that. [interjections] It's obvious they don't like to hear good news, and they don't like to hear the truth. Also as it relates to the relationship with Mexico, we see greater opportunities for the sales of petrochemical equipment, agricultural equipment, oil and gas equipment, mining equipment.

MR. SPEAKER: Forgive me, hon. minister. I see one member leaving the House. I would hope that the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry would stay in the House for an exchange to take place later.

Please continue.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, it's also noteworthy that some 80 percent of the goods coming into Canada from Mexico are presently duty free. We view it as a positive impact, whereby we will have greater access to a population much greater than our own. Not only that, but we want to see a country that is developing, such as Mexico, have an opportunity to raise their standard of living, unlike hon. members opposite, who want to see these countries remain depressed.

MR. SPEAKER: Question period has expired. I understand there are one or two points of order.

The first one is from the Leader of the Opposition, I believe.

Point of Order

Oral Question Period Rules

MR. MARTIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. The point of order has to do with question period. On the opposition side when the Speaker feels that we're being off topic, he generally steps in and says so. When the question from the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry to the Premier was asked about his travel, he got into talking about the Speaker and the way the House is run, which was totally irrelevant, and he should have been shot down for that.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. I will examine the Blues on that one.

Edmonton-Highlands.

Point of Order

Explanation of Speaker's Ruling

MS BARRETT: Thank you. Under Standing Order 13 I rise to request an explanation from the Chair. Mr. Speaker, two years ago I wrote to you and said that I was startled. In fact, I

will read one paragraph from the letter.

The startling matter relates to the schedule entitled Expressions Ruled Unparliamentary by Speakers of the Alberta Legislative Assembly, 1905 to 1989. Some 78 of the total 104 expressions cited constituting fully 75 percent of all expressions ruled unparliamentary since 1905 have been so ruled since June 1986, which constitutes in years only 4.7 percent of the entire history of the Assembly. In other words, the vast majority of the rulings to declare words or phrases unparliamentary have occurred during the last four years. At this rate it is possible that within a matter of years we would need lists of words and phrases that are parliamentary instead of those which are not parliamentary.

The reason I read this portion of the letter into the record is related to the ruling on "hypocrite" today. Mr. Speaker, the *Beauchesne* rule book, which we often cite, often by the Speaker, I understand, as one of the highest authorities, indicates the following expressions, citation 490: "Since 1958, it has been ruled parliamentary to use the following expressions." Included, if you go to the section H, you will see "hypocrisy" and "hypocrites." Hypocrites is merely the plural of the singular hypocrite. That ruling, which dates to 1975, postdates the original rulings on the matter that are also cited in *Beauchesne*, which relate to 1961. One assumes that things were progressing by 1975.

Therefore, my request under Standing Order 13 is an explanation as to why it is that the rule book we're supposed to be using as one of our highest authorities, if not the highest, is overturned by a ruling on your part to declare the word "hypocrite" unconstitutional, unparliamentary, or otherwise illegal.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, in speaking to the point of order the hon. member is referring to, it's been generally agreed, I think, that although the Standing Orders are important to the Assembly – in Standing Order 13 the hon. member is asking not for an interpretation of a ruling, but indeed the hon. member is asking for the reasons for a decision. I submit there's a difference, Mr. Speaker. I refer hon. members to *Beauchesne* 404, and I quote: "No questions of any sort may be addressed to the Speaker. If information . . . is required," et cetera. I don't think the hon. member has a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: It needs to be pointed out that there was no *Hansard* till 1972. Therefore, the complete list of terms that have been ruled unparliamentary really has not been delineated, since there was no *Hansard* for that complete period of time. The correspondence will be reviewed, which the member has only read in part. I'm sure all hon. members will read carefully what transpired today in terms of the Blues, because the rulings that are made in this House take precedence over Ottawa, over the House of Commons at Westminster.

As pointed out earlier today, when comments are directed at an individual, as the comment was made today, they've been ruled out of order. Again, that took place June 8, '87, and again March 18, '91, and again on June 13, 1991.

Are there any other points of order that need to be addressed at this moment?

Speaker's Ruling Criticizing the Speaker

MR. SPEAKER: For a few moments, let us refer to *Beauchesne* as well as to what is generally expected to transpire in terms of a Legislature. Earlier today, in the spirited exchange between Edmonton-Glengarry, the Premier, and the Chair having to intervene, a number of unfortunate statements were made. I think it probably wouldn't hurt the House to listen to

Beauchesne 168, to read into the record:

No Member may rise when the Speaker is standing. Reflections upon the character or actions of the Speaker may be punished as breaches of privilege. The actions of the Speaker cannot be criticized incidentally in debate or upon any form of proceeding except by way of a substantive motion.

I think all hon. members are aware of the fact that some members do continue to rise while the Speaker is standing and attempting to bring order to the House. That was violated today. Reflections upon the character and actions of the Speaker indeed took place. Criticism of the Chair not only incidentally took place but took place in a forthright manner.

3:30

Now, the terms of action would be for the member to make an apology to the House. Failing that, the member has indeed the right to proceed and to bring a substantive motion before the House at the earliest opportunity, which would perhaps be drafted this afternoon and could be brought forward tomorrow. The Chair is willing to accept either one of those actions.

Then we go on and reflect upon *Beauchesne* 192:

On several occasions Speakers have refused to hear Members who have, in the opinion of the Chair, exceeded the bounds of orderly conduct.

Then if you care, you might also reflect upon *Beauchesne* 193. The Chair gives that by way of advice to the House. The Chair will wait to see whether or not an apology is received, or failing that, we look forward to dealing with a substantive motion.

Edmonton-Glengarry.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I noted your comments and noted your reference to section 168 of *Beauchesne*. If you look at the first sentence of 168, it calls for the Speaker to be impartial during the course of debate. It wasn't very long ago in this Assembly when in the course of putting questions to the Premier, the Premier referred to me as being "slimy."

SOME HON. MEMBERS: "Slippery."

MR. DECORE: "Slippery." Sorry. Somebody else in the opposition was called "slimy."

I had to rise on a point of order to get the Speaker's attention to ask the Speaker to have an apology brought forward. That same expression was used a second time. Unfortunately, you were not in this Assembly at that time. The Deputy Speaker was, and he took no action. Now, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that what's good for the goose is good for the gander. If you're going to come down on the opposition, fine, but it seems to me that the Speaker has to come down on the government side in the same impartial way, and I think there's evidence that that isn't being done. All I'm asking is that there be fairness and equity in the dealings with all members of this Assembly.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry that I offended you today. I didn't intend to offend you. I apologize if I offended you. But I'm asking that that fairness be extended to both sides of the House. It's not uncommon for the Speaker to rise and interrupt a member of the opposition and put him down and stop a question from being put and break the sequence of that question and the way that that question is being placed to the minister or to the Premier, but it's totally uncommon for the Speaker to rise and interject when a Premier or a minister is speaking. It seems to me that somebody might look at that and say that that was unfair. Now, I apologize to you, Mr. Speaker, if I have offended the Chair today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. I think if you review the record, you will discover that the Premier was brought to order on at least one other occasion for some comment sent in your direction. Also, with respect to the particular word that you used a short while ago, the Chair was intervening with or without your kind of direction. There have been other occasions where the Chair has suffered the displeasure of some of the cabinet ministers because I have called them to order for shouting various statements across the House directed at opposition benches. I will accept the apology, but I think that all of us could deal selectively in terms of what portions of *Hansard* in the last five years we choose to quote.

Thank you, hon. member.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Written Questions**

Public Opinion Polls

384. Mr. Chumir asked the government the following question: How much did the government spend on public opinion polling during the fiscal year 1990-91?

MR. GOGO: The government rejects Written Question 384, Mr. Speaker.

head: **Motions for Returns**

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I move that motions for returns stand and retain their places on the Order Paper, except for 206 and 212.

[Motion carried]

Pulp Mill Fish Bioassays

206. Mr. Mitchell moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of the laboratory reports of fish bioassays from January 1, 1989, or in the case of Daishowa from the start of operations, until March 1, 1991, as submitted to Alberta Environment by

- (1) Procter & Gamble Cellulose Ltd., Grande Prairie,
- (2) Weldwood of Canada Ltd., Hinton,
- (3) Millar Western Pulp Ltd., Whitecourt, and
- (4) Daishowa Canada Co. Ltd.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of the Environment.

MR. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my intention to accept the motion with an amendment. The amendment proposed is to delete the word "reports" and substitute the word "results."

Very briefly, the rationale for the amendment is that the results are certainly the substantive portion of any report. A report leading to a result has in it a number of statements that could be deemed to be inconclusive and misinterpreted. I think the hon. member would agree that having the results of a report, the conclusions, would probably be more in the best interests of the public's right to know.

MR. SPEAKER: With respect to the amendment, a call for the question.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion on amendment carried]

MR. SPEAKER: Now, on Motion for a Return 206 as amended: additional comments? Conclusion?

MR. MITCHELL: Fine, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the amendment, and I appreciate that the minister would accept it as amended.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion as amended carried]

Hazardous Waste Disposal

212. On behalf of Mr. Decore, Mr. Mitchell moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing any and all agreements between the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation and the Department of the Environment dealing with the management and storage of hazardous waste materials in Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of the Environment.

MR. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would accept Motion for a Return 212 with an amendment. The amendment would be deleting the words "any and all" and substituting therefor "information on existing." The rationale for this amendment is simply this. First of all, I'll state at the outset that we have no problem providing the information contained within the agreement. However, if the motion were accepted as it is, we may be setting a precedent for releasing any future agreement that may be of a proprietary nature. In other words, we don't want to precommit ourselves to any future agreements. Relative to the situation as it now stands, there is currently only one existing agreement between Alberta Environment and the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation, and that affects the operation of a 21 cubic foot freezer at the Alberta Environmental Centre. I will file that agreement and the terms of that agreement and what it sets out to accomplish in very short order.

MR. SPEAKER: Call for the question with respect to the amendment.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion on amendment carried]

3:40

MR. SPEAKER: On the motion as amended, any other speakers?

In concluding debate, the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, on behalf of Edmonton-Glengarry.

MR. MITCHELL: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. We accept the motion as amended. I would like to thank the minister for being forthcoming with this information.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: There's a call for the question.

[Motion as amended carried]

head: **Motions Other than Government Motions**

Public Lands

219. Moved by Mr. Musgrove:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to enhance integrated resource management for public lands in Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: Bow Valley.

MR. MUSGROVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly my pleasure today to introduce Motion 219 and to make some comments about it. Motion 219 is to further enhance our integrated resource management.

We were put on this Earth and we were blessed with a lot of natural resources for our use. I doubt if there's anyone today whose very living isn't somehow connected to our natural resources, so for that reason we must see that we manage them well. As our population continues to grow, we depend more on things that are on this Earth for our use, and we have to do a better job of managing as we go along, particularly to sustain those resources that are renewable. One of the other things is that when we do manage one natural resource, almost always they affect another one, so we have to integrate our management practices so that we do not affect another resource at its expense. The province of Alberta has done a great job of introducing integrated management of natural resources, but we have to be continually conscious of how our integration of those is taking place.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Originally on this Earth natural resources didn't require a lot of management. I'm told that Adam and Eve were the original people on this Earth, and through what I have read, their only resources necessary were apples and figs, and there were also some stories about serpents. However, things have progressed considerably since that time. In our recorded history our native people did do some management of natural resources, which they lived off of entirely. I was at Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump the other day and was reading about how the natives used some controlled burning of grass so that the wildlife would move onto the new growths of grass after it had been burned and was more palatable. Therefore, in that way they controlled where some of their buffalo herds would be in particular. They also adjusted their hunting practices every year so as to not overuse or overhunt part of the wildlife that they depended on but used a balance of hunting practices so that they could manage their wildlife.

One of the things that I think we should all be conscious of is that our natural resources are controlled by nature. In other words, if we don't harvest our natural resources, nature has its own way of controlling and managing them. For people to look at nature's way, sometimes those ways nature controls wildlife and natural resources are quite cruel. I can recall back in the '60s when we had an overpopulation of antelope in my country. Then in the winter of 1964-65 that overpopulation of antelope was certainly curtailed by the terribly hard winter we had. Although a lot of them died, some of them did migrate to other areas, and we had a low population of antelope for several years afterwards: nature's way of controlling.

We now have the technology to control our forest fires, and I'm sure no one wants to see continued burning of forest fires, but that's nature's way of renewing our forests. If we continue

to control forest fires completely, within 100 years we will have nothing but old forests, and old forests do burn regardless of what we can do about it. I've known a forest fire to start from internal combustion from a dead tree that was lying in an old forest. So they will burn. As we control our forest fires, we must then manage our forests to keep a sustainable new growth coming. That's where our forestry industry is a benefit, not a detriment, to our society.

It's also argued by people that by our forestry industry we're creating a problem with wildlife habitat in those areas. I submit that old forests are not good habitat for wildlife. As a matter of fact, I spent some time four years ago, I guess, out in the Willmore wilderness with a friend of mine who was an outfitter, and we traveled over a lot of that area on horseback, covered many miles. Where there was old forest, there was no wildlife for the simple reason that where you have an old forest, your browse is 20 to 30 feet off the ground. No animals can reach it; there's no grass because it's protected from the sun. You do have a bit of moss growing. But in our freshly forested areas it's been my experience that you've got a tremendous amount of grass, and it is great for wildlife. The other problem that they had out in the old forests was that the wildlife had left because it was infested with wolves, and they said that there was no young wildlife. Moose and elk out there were generally barren for the simple reason that wolves would follow them when they were about to bear their young and quite often got the young before the mother ever got up. So they said that the wildlife left the area, and consequently so did the wolves. That's nature's way of controlling natural resources.

I also had an experience quite a long time ago on how nature controls things. We have an area down in my constituency called the Canadian Forces Base Suffield, known to most of us as the British block. This was an area of about 30 townships of land that was bought up by the government for army experiments. During the '40s and, well, right up into the '60s, this area was only used by the army. There were some quite good years, and we got tremendous grass growths down there, and it burned. It was my record that the whole area burned off at least every seven years. The reason it did was because there was no control over the grass growth, and nature set it afire. I stood on the outside of the British block one day and saw 11 prairie fires start from a lightning storm that went through. To control that was impossible. The army generally let it burn off when it caught fire. Quite often it got outside of the British block and burned off some privately owned land as well.

But the thing about the wildlife in there. People that were observing those fires – whenever deer and antelope were moving ahead of the fire, there were generally no young with them because the intense heat and the speed that those animals had to travel to get out of the way of those fires was more than the young could handle. They generally were lost. Wildlife, particularly deer and antelope, had a tremendous benefit in those areas as long as there were no prairie fires, but as soon as there were prairie fires, the increase in that wildlife was inhibited.

3:50

I'd like to talk a bit about water management. Water is probably the most important natural resource that we have today and will continue to be more important into the future. Our snowmelt in the mountains is generally where most of our flow in our rivers comes from; 75 percent of the annual flow of the rivers, particularly in southern Alberta, is in the months of June and July every year. If you can't stop that water and contain it

when it's in the river, it's lost forever into the Hudson Bay. So it's very important that we are able to control the oversupply of water during that short period of time for the use of everyone.

We could talk about the Oldman River dam. It was very important that we build the Oldman River dam for several reasons, and of course some of what I hear is that it's only for a few farmers, but it's for everyone in southern Alberta. The river flow gets to the point during late summer where it is hardly enough to supply water to the city of Lethbridge, let alone to irrigation farmers. With the construction and completion of the Oldman dam the flow of that river will be controlled so that there's a sustainable amount of water flowing through the system during the peak season and for the rest of the year.

One of the things that I've always been a strong supporter of is that municipal wastewater should be used for sprinkler irrigation. I did a private member's Bill on that some years ago, Mr. Speaker, and I continue to support that management of our resource. Not only does it take the wastewater from the cities out of our rivers, but it is an enhanced water for irrigation purposes for the simple reason that it has phosphates and nitrates in it that we spend a lot of money removing as municipal sewage. If it was used for sprinkler irrigation, why, those phosphates and nitrates would be better left in because all land needs added phosphates and nitrates. So I believe that by using our municipal wastewater for sprinkler irrigation, we not only increase irrigation availability, but we also keep our rivers cleaner.

Mr. Speaker, I have to agree that when we start controlling our rivers by the use of dams and reservoirs, we do have to look at mitigation. I recently stopped at the site of the Oldman River dam and would hope that everybody in this House would have a look at the work that has gone into mitigation for that dam. Not only have they kept the natural fishery abilities there, but when the dam is filled, the fishing options will probably be a hundredfold what they originally were on the river. I saw recently a lot of deer and antelope around the dam. I certainly think the increased vegetation that will be created by the dam will probably enhance the amount of wildlife that is there. There have also been some ponds for geese and ducks. Certainly the wildlife that will be in that area will probably be quite a lot more than when the river was in its natural state.

Mr. Speaker, when we're talking about integrated management of resources, we also have to talk about our natural wildlife and the ability to control wildlife but also enhance our economy. In this case, I'm talking about elk ranching. I'm not suggesting that we capture any more wild elk for the purpose of elk ranching, but I do believe we have a resource there that is going to be of benefit to our farming community. It's been discovered that you can grow more red meat on a particular parcel of land by raising elk than you can by raising beef cattle. Also, there is now a demand for elk meat by the consumer in restaurants and in our supermarkets. So although it has run into some setbacks over the last year, once those problems are settled, I believe it will enhance our farmers and allow them to diversify into something that's needed.

Also, we should talk about our fur-bearing animals. I've always been concerned about the lack of management of fur-bearing animals, even back in my municipal days. What we do is that we wait until we have a problem with overpopulation of some of our fur-bearing animals, then we do something to manage it. I've always been a strong advocate of starting our management practice when we recognize that there is an overpopulation. For instance, sometimes during my lifetime we've had an overpopulation of coyotes that were causing

problems to ranchers and sheepmen and poultry raisers. What we would do is we would go out with 1080 bait and poison them. Poisoning anything is to my way of thinking a cruel way of handling it. But besides that we had a revenue-earning resource there that we should have been harvesting properly so that we didn't get to that overpopulation stage.

One of the other problems that we've run into a lot is overpopulation of beaver. Of course, the supply and demand market always dictates whether you harvest fur-bearing animals like beaver and coyotes and wolves and whatever, but we should manage the resource so that we don't run into those hills and valleys of supply and demand. Quite often there's a lot of beaver killed because they build dams close to roadways or they flood someone's field or they get into irrigation ditches. In our country there are more beavers killed because they're causing irrigation problems than are ever harvested as a fur-bearing animal. It's my contention that that should not happen. We should recognize that we're going to have a problem before it happens and start a management series there so that these animals will be harvested properly as a resource rather than destroyed as a pest.

4:00

Also in our natural resources we have our fossil fuels, minerals, and coal mines. When I was quite young, coal mining was probably one of the biggest industries in Alberta. Most of us burned coal in our homes. It was used in our trains; it was used in foundries; it was exported to wherever. As our technology increased, the use of coal dropped, so coal mining is not a big industry right now, but it does affect other natural resources. For instance, wherever there were large strip mines of coal, it affected grazing, and wildlife had to move out. So although not an important industry today, coal mining was at one time. Our energy – our fossil fuels, gas and oil for instance – is something that we need to integrate our management of. As we move our gas and oil industry farther into the north, of course, it affects the forestry industry, it affects the trapping industry, and it does affect some wildlife habitat. So we need to integrate those so that we have the least impact on our other industries.

They tell me that there's enough energy in the oil sands in northern Alberta to last the North American continent for 250 years. During the '70s and early '80s we kept hearing from folks about how we had to control our production of our gas and oil resources because we could run out someday. We've hardly touched the natural resources or the heavy oil sands in the north because of the cost of production, but someday it will become a very important industry as the other supplies of conventional fuels are lowered. Probably not in my time, but I suspect that northern Alberta at some time or another will have one of the biggest industries. I even suggested to people during the time of the Gulf war that we should start a North American energy policy where we would supply the North American continent with all the energy that they need, with a guarantee that they would buy it all from us. I'm sure that wouldn't be an easy thing to sell, but it's a thought that we could have a look at. I'm absolutely sure that 250 years from now technology will be so that the need for our fossil fuels to supply our energy will probably not be as important as it is today.

We need to continue to manage our natural resources, Mr. Speaker. That's very important. But we also need to recognize that we need to integrate our management so that we do not adversely affect one natural resource by the management of another one. We also need to recognize that whatever natural resources we have and we don't manage, nature has a way of

managing. So it's in our best interests to see that we do manage them properly and substantively.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't wish to cover all the complexity of the presentation that we just heard, but I do feel that the motion put forward by the hon. member is worthy of debate in this Legislature. I intend to support it, if it comes to a vote, because I certainly think that we need a better system for planning land use in the province of Alberta, one which will ensure that this generation and the next generation are able to hand over a province which our children will be proud of and pleased to accept.

I'm hearing a lot of younger people these days rejecting the notion that older people built this province and built this nation and they should honour them and be proud of it. I hear more of them saying that previous generations have sold away our resources and have given away some of our heritage and left them with some bills that have to be paid by way of budgetary deficit. I think it's an unfortunate attitude that's developing among younger people in our population, and if the members don't believe me, they should talk to some of the younger people about what they think about what's going on. I think a process for planning the use of our resources and the land that goes with that is very important if we're going to make certain that we have something that we want to call a sustainable economy or a sustainable environment into the future.

Now, I appreciate that the government has a committee called the round table on economic development and environment which is wrestling with this question of what sustainable development is supposed to mean in an Alberta context. I think what we're getting into through that is an intensive effort to fabricate language, rhetoric which will be usable by the government when it makes economic development decisions. I think we should deal in this debate with the integrated resource planning process such as it exists now in the province of Alberta, because that's the base that we're working from, and if we want to talk about reform, I think we have to have a good understanding of the system as it presently operates.

Integrated resource planning is described in the government document as

A guide for resource managers, industry and the public having responsibility or interests in the area [of an integrated resource plan] rather than a regulatory mechanism.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, the integrated resource planning process is not presently used as a means to determine what activities do and don't take place. That's left to other people to decide. So if, for example, plans are instructed to be "sufficiently flexible" – and I'm quoting here from government policy – "so that all future proposals for land use and development may be considered," all future proposals may be considered. So the integrated resource planning such as it's practised in the province of Alberta excludes nothing; nothing is ruled out. Developers are told in a very soothing fashion: "Don't worry about what's in the IRP. It can all be changed. Go ahead and approach your minister anyway, and we'll see if something can be done." Well, we all know that there are people who can get things done in government; a lot of people who can't. An integrated resource plan doesn't provide much guidance.

"Implementation" of integrated resource plans "will be subject to the normal budgetary approval process." So whatever is

developed by way of these public input processes that people are a part of is not necessarily implemented, because that depends on the budgetary process. I want to quote what I think really hits the nail on the head:

This plan has no legal status and is subject to revisions or review at the discretion of the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife.

I underline the words "no legal status." An IRP is quite simply not worth the paper it's written on in terms of regulating land use patterns and protecting natural areas of the province.

Now, if you believe, as the hon. member does, that fire control is going to create old-growth forests in the province of Alberta, and if you believe, as he apparently does, that old forests are not suitable wildlife habitat, then I suggest probably you would be in line with the idea of the pulp industry liquidating the forests, because if an old-growth forest is an abomination and something that's not suitable for wildlife – you know, try and tell that to . . . There are certain animals that need old-growth forest as their habitat, and obviously some that don't, some that depend on browsing and grazing, but the caribou, for example . . .

MR. CARDINAL: Caribou live on the muskeg. You should know better.

4:10

MR. McINNIS: . . . up in the hon. member's district of Smoky River need old-growth forests, and there are a variety of birds that require old-growth forests as well. It may not be habitat for whatever you were trying to shoot on that occasion, but it is definitely an important habitat and an important part of the forest.

Now, I think the forestry example probably indicates as clearly as anything how the integrated resource planning process fails to serve Albertans. You know, I've been watching the progress of the northeast regional plan for some time because much of the forestry operation is planned for that area, especially the Al-Pac pulp mill, where the trees from an area that extends way north of Fort McMurray are going to be trucked I think on average in excess of a hundred kilometres per load to a pulp mill to be centrally processed. All that's being done, and the government suggests that somehow the public will be involved in those land-use decisions through the integrated resource planning process.

Well, following the progress of that, back in March 1989 the resource planning branch plan update reported that:

The plan was presented to the Resource Integration Committee on January 27 and February 17, 1989 for their review and approval. So it seemed like we were in pretty good shape at that point, ready to go with a regional plan. At that point the Al-Pac proposal had not been officially sanctioned by the government. In September that year they reported that the plan was "being rewritten to describe the revised planning program." So some progress was definitely being made. The most recent update that I've got, January 1991, says, "Progress on [the northeast regional] plan is tied to the provincial land use strategy initiative, which continues to be developed." All of a sudden the plan's been derailed because we've got something else here called the "provincial land use strategy initiative," which has taken focus away.

Meanwhile, the government has, so far as I know, concluded negotiations with Alberta-Pacific on a forest management agreement that covers almost all of that region. The forest management agreement, as most members know, essentially

transfers ownership of the trees from the people of Alberta through their government to a pulp company and says that they have a right to harvest those trees over a rotation period. That's the sense in which I've referred to the integrated resource planning process as a cruel hoax, because it makes people believe that somehow, if they participate in this process, they will have some influence on the way things are in the future. For example, if you have the type of vision I have of the northern forests – where there would be room for the aboriginal economy as well as the forest industry economy, where there would be room for forests to grow old and die, like some people like to do, as opposed to all of it being harvested like clockwork, that there be room for recreational opportunities, that there be a well-planned and well-balanced mix, that forestry be done on a more intensive basis, not just cut it down and hope and dream that it's going to come back by itself, as the minister of forests does and the forest industry does – we don't have a process that's going to do that. We've got a planning process which has ground to a halt. The most it can produce is a document that has no legal status whatsoever and is subject to change at the whim of the minister. That's not a planning process.

The Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife took great offence when I called that process a cruel hoax, and he wrote me a letter in which he said:

The preparation of integrated resources plans in Northern Alberta has been accelerated to ensure timber resources are managed in concert with other natural resources.

Well, accelerate, my foot. The northeast plan is in limbo at the moment, and it's leading eventually, if everything goes well, to a document which will have no legal status and will not necessarily result in any change in any person's behaviour.

So I think we have to take seriously the concern that some young people are expressing, that we in this province have no right to give away our resources; we have no right to create the kind of environmental, legislative, political, and fiscal deficit which we hand over to the next generation. I think we should right now resolve today by passing this motion that we want to get a handle on our future, that we want to make our future one that's viable for the very long term.

You know, the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche and I don't agree on everything, to be sure, but we do agree that in respect of some of the lakes in northeastern Alberta there should be some detailed land-use planning around those lakes, because there's going to be a lot of pressure from development and from the industry in the next decade or so. Decisions may be made which are irreversible. Commitments made, money spent, projects built, damage done which would be difficult if not impossible to undo. I wrote him a note saying that we should definitely get to work on planning the areas around those lakes to make sure that we're going to have the kind of communities, the kind of industrial structure, the kind of environmental framework which will allow future generations to thrive and prosper in ways that present and past generations have.

I think this initiative needs the support of members. It doesn't say a heck of a lot. It says: let's move forward. I think we need to move forward in the direction of giving the planning process some clout, some say, some influence on what's going to happen in the future, and make sure that the people who participate in those will have their influence through that process and make certain that these aren't things that can just be changed at the whim of a minister or held out to developers as not precluding anything. The reality is that if we're going to include certain things, we have to preclude others. That's a reality we all face in our daily lives. You make a decision to

do one thing; you made a decision not to do some other thing. I don't think it's a crime for us to say that with some of our absolutely precious heritage – our resources, our scenic resources, our tourism destination resources, our wildland resources – we're not going to allow some people to wreck them, we're not going to allow you to take that away from us. We have that right as a people. We have that right as a Legislative Assembly. So I think we should pass this motion and get on with the job.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to state my support for this motion. It is clear that there are many examples which would indicate the need to enhance the integrated resource management process for developing plans for public lands. So the member is to be congratulated. I'm certain from his comments and undoubtedly from his experience in working within this government that he has seen many, many cases where the planning process hasn't worked and requires to be enhanced. The operative word in this motion, of course, is "enhance." What does that mean, and how far is this government prepared to go in defining that word in a way that is meaningful?

I would just like to list a number of examples briefly of where the management of public lands has broken down. I would begin by talking about the proposed Deadwood-Dixonville community forest. This is an idea that's been raised by residents of the Deadwood and Dixonville communities. They're asking for about a 270-square-kilometre area of forested land which they could manage themselves for considered commercial purposes, for wildlife management, for the protection of their community and their areas against erosion due to harmful logging techniques, and so on. It is an original, creative idea. This government has neglected to incorporate this community's proposal in its integrated plan for that region. Not only have they neglected to incorporate the proposal, but in fact, Mr. Speaker, they have neglected to attend meetings with the proponents of this idea, meetings to which they have been invited.

4:20

It's quite ironic, I would argue, Mr. Speaker, that this government finds no difficulty in handing over 180,000 square kilometres of forested land to multinational corporations to manage but can't even find the common courtesy to send officials to attend a meeting to discuss the proposal by local residents of the Deadwood-Dixonville area to discuss their proposal for creating a community forest of only 270 square kilometres. I ask the member and I ask his government: what kind of integrated resource planning process would exclude consideration of a proposal by local community members in the report and even exclude the attendance by government officials at a meeting to discuss this proposal? It's difficult to comprehend, and it certainly argues strongly for the need to enhance that process. It became clear in the Deadwood-Dixonville issue that the integrated resource plan was endorsed – and I use this word loosely – at local community meetings in the area, which the government holds up to say, "This is a proof of local endorsement."

Well, Mr. Speaker, the people who go to these meetings are clearly self-selecting. The meetings, these public coffee parties, aren't held out to be anything other than a meeting where you

come and get information; they're not held out to be a meeting that will endorse or not endorse a given plan. Clearly, if that is a voting process, it isn't fair, it isn't structured properly, and it can be used however the government wants to use it. If they get their plan endorsed by whoever happens to arbitrarily appear, they can say, "Look, we've got community support." If they don't get their plan endorsed by those people, they can say, "Well, it doesn't really matter, because this is just an informal approval process." If it is that they want to have – and I believe they need that – a certain feature of the process of integrated planning to be endorsement or a vote by local community residents, then clearly this process must have a formal plebiscite kind of process so that people are asked to vote, they know what they're voting for, they know the significance of that vote, and this isn't something that happens by and by or as an offhanded chance at some coffee party that's held by the government in some community hall with doughnuts and coffee and informal chitchat.

With respect to the impact, the power of plans, they have no legal status, and this government uses them in some cases, I believe, for little more than public relations. They say at a difficult time in a political issue, "Look, we're going to plan; this is the plan; aren't we good?" Then when times change, they just change that plan. The plan has served the purpose because it's convinced people that they're doing something right, but in fact it's meaningless beyond public relations. Two examples. Lakeland park in northeastern Alberta: when was that proposed, Mr. Speaker? At the height of the debate about Al-Pac, at the height of the debate about how much forested area was going to be taken and given over to multinational corporations. So Recreation and Parks – I can see him in my mind's eye standing up in caucus and saying: "I'm going to solve this problem because I'm going to stand up, and I'm Wyatt Earp coming to the rescue of the Conservative caucus. I'm going to propose that we create this wonderful park right in the midst of all these forestry management agreement areas, and that will send such wonderful public relations for us to the people of Alberta, because they'll see that we're setting land aside."

What happens a year later when the debate dies down, Mr. Speaker? Hey, no money in the budget to propose that park, and now we have the classic case of the Minister of Agriculture, the MLA for that area, being given permission, undoubtedly by his caucus and his cabinet, to break solidarity and come out and say he's against that park. That park will die, because despite the fact that it had been "planned for," the plan was nothing more than public relations, and when the maelstrom passed, what happened? Well, they just backed right off.

Similarly with respect to Kananaskis park. The integrated plan said that you can't build a golf course in this certain area. Now we see another nine holes being proposed, and it's going to cut into that certain area. Of what value was that integrated plan? It was probably structured at the time when the Kananaskis proposal was being debated and the government needed to provide some solace to people who were concerned about the environment, that this wasn't going to be a rampant commercial development throughout this area, but that it would be staged and planned and limited properly. Of course, when that debate passes, the heat's reduced. They come back, ever smiling, ever leaning, ever pressing beyond the bounds of this idea that they loosely construe as a plan.

Forestry management agreements. Mr. Speaker, we really have no process for drawing up plans for northern forests, and if we ever get one, there are no provisions anywhere, particularly for proper public input. Any resource planning process must

have proper public input, not coffee parties, not these loosely construed efforts, meetings where the government or a proponent or a company can tell people whatever they want, but properly structured public input. There are many cases that we can cite where the integrated planning process hasn't worked to date. There are a number of things that need to be implemented for it to be strengthened. The plans must have legal force, legal status. The process must be open to proper public input and public meetings, and there must a proper public endorsement process so that the plans can be passed or failed by the people in the areas that will be affected by that plan.

Mr. Speaker, yes, this Legislature should support this motion, and they should also support it knowing that the nature of the planning process, the enhancement of the planning process must be defined very, very carefully to include at least those three elements and certainly many more which I would speak about except that my time is running out.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the Assembly ready for the question?

The hon. Member for Rocky Mountain House.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It indeed does give me a great deal of pleasure to rise and speak to Motion 219 today, especially in light of what we have just heard from the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place and the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark. I find the last number of comments extremely interesting, because at one point they are talking about we shouldn't be making decisions that affect the future generations, and then they talk about making a plan that is all-binding and all-encompassing, that can't be changed. You can't have it both ways. It's got to be one way or the other.

Having listened to both of them, especially the hon. member that seems to be an expert on rotten wood, I find it extremely interesting. I suspect that neither one of them has ever been involved in the development or implementation of one of these plans. I could hardly believe my ears when I heard some of the comments about how the plan is meaningless. Well, I can assure you that they are not meaningless. I have had quite a bit of firsthand experience with these plans. Of course, I recognize that there is much, much more to do in this whole planning area, but the process started to the south, had started in the Eastern Slopes, and of course much of the Rocky Mountain House constituency is covered by that, so we have gone through many of these plans. We've gone through the Eastern Slopes policy. We've gone through the regional plans. We've gone through the subregional . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member, but Standing Order 8(3) requires me to interrupt the hon. member and advise the Assembly that the time allotted for this order of business has expired.

head: **Public Bills and Orders Other than**
head: **Government Bills and Orders**
head: **Second Reading**

4:30

Bill 211
Labour Relations Code Amendment Act

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Belmont.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's funny, you know, sir. When you stood up last, I thought you were going to call for the question. However.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 211 attempts to deal with only one section of a Bill that is so filled with flaws that the only way to really deal with the Labour Relations Code would be to scrap it, toss it out, throw it away, recycle it, but not reuse very much of it and then bring it back. But, you know, you've got to sort of work at this Bill little bit by little bit. Even as rotten as the legislation currently is, hopefully, if some of the amendments are accepted by the government, maybe after a period of time, after some care and some nourishment you might find that the Bill just may be able to assist those people whom it governs, and that's the workers of the province of Alberta.

You know, Mr. Speaker, last fall in this Legislative Assembly we attempted to amend this very code, the Labour Relations Code, with a different amendment. That amendment last fall was to deal with the use of replacement workers. There's an area that I would have hoped would have had more attention and more participation by members of the Assembly. But the government with its strength of majority, supported by the Liberal Party, decided to vote against it.

Today I'm not going to go through all of the problems that this piece of legislation has brought about since its introduction in 1988. I want to focus in on only one area. While there are contained in Bill 211 a number of sections that would be amended were this amendment to pass, it deals quite frankly with only one area, and that's the area that is fundamental to workers: the area of organization of workers into a bargaining unit, the organization of workers into a trade union.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I do want to start, though, with the preamble, because contained in the preamble in 1988 in the Bill that was introduced by the then Labour Minister, Mr. Reid, from the constituency of West Yellowhead . . . We argued at that time, sir – I'm sure you'll recall the arguments – that there's nowhere in the preamble in that particular Bill, in what indeed is now our legislation, that recognizes the fundamental rights of workers to belong to a trade union. In fact, if anything, you'll find that in the government's preamble there's no use of the word "trade union" at all. They tried to the best of their ability to hide it, to subvert it, to limit it, to not even involve that term. You didn't want to have that term in the preamble. I see some members shaking their heads, happy and glad that it's not there so they can go back to their constituency and say, "Boy, back out on the farm we put 'em down, we got rid of 'em, and they ain't coming back."

Well, let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, the trade union movement has sort of slowed down maybe a little bit. It's come up against a couple of walls. Those walls aren't insurmountable. And you know what, Mr. Speaker? There'll be a time in the not too distant future when the trade union movement and a progressive government will be able to rewrite the legislation that protects workers' rights. That progressive government will start with a strong preamble that recognizes the role of the trade union movement, of workers and of management, of labour and management in society today.

What I would hope, Mr. Speaker, with the indulgence of the Assembly, what I would like to do, for the benefit of those people that subscribe to *Hansard* and don't necessarily receive copies of the Bill, is read into the record for those subscribers the preamble that would be contained in a different piece of legislation, in a piece of legislation that recognizes more fully workers' rights. It is a bit lengthy, but I'm sure that some members will want to hear what it is that we have to offer. It starts off:

Whereas it is in the public interest that cooperative efforts by labour and management towards the development of good

relations and constructive collective bargaining practices be promoted and supported, and

Whereas the Legislature of Alberta recognizes that the development of harmonious industrial relations is crucial to ensure that the fruits of progress can be shared by all.

Then we take some of the government's Bill because it's not all bad, as I said. We take a few paragraphs from the government.

Whereas it is fitting that the worth and dignity of all Albertans be recognized by the Legislature of Alberta through legislation that encourages fair and equitable resolution of matters arising in respect of terms and conditions of employment; and

Whereas the employee-employer relationship is based on a common interest in the success of the employing organization, best recognized through open and honest communication between affected parties; and

Whereas Alberta workers, trade unions and employers recognize and support freedom of association and free collective bargaining as the bases of effective industrial relations for the determination of good working conditions and sound labour-management relations,

and it goes on.

You see, Mr. Speaker, the point of this is that, unlike the government preamble, what this amendment recognizes is that there is value in having the role of the trade union defined; in having the bargaining agent involved in the process and not being afraid of what the bargaining agent may or may not do; in having people that want to join trade unions, belong to trade unions, and bargain collectively for the rights that they want to have at their workplace.

Mr. Speaker, I suspect that what will happen is that when the government gets up to respond to this piece of legislation, they're going to turn to section 19(1) of the current legislation and quote back to me that

An employee has the right

- (a) to be a member of a trade union and to participate in its lawful activities, and
- (b) to bargain collectively with his employer through a bargaining agent.

Mr. Speaker, while that's there in the legislation, while that's there supposedly as the right of every worker in our province, that doesn't seem to be happening. I have had, sir, a number of complaints of occasions when workers have signed up, signed their union card, paid their \$2, tried to form a bargaining unit, tried to become part of a collective agreement, and they can't do it. Why can't they do it? We now have also in this legislation such latitude that the employer is allowed to get away with almost anything an employer wants, because there is no longer any fear of having any automatic certification. In the old labour code, if there was an unfair labour practice, what would happen if the employer were to be involved in a unionizing drive, whether pro or con? There would be an automatic certification; the union would be recognized, and you'd get into a collective bargaining relationship.

Now what happens if an employer is involved? Nothing much happens; nothing much happens at all. Workers get to go to the Labour Relations Board. The Labour Relations Board says: "Oh, well, there's not an awful lot that we can do. There may be some evidence that there was some wrongdoing, and we can ask that the employer send a letter out correcting the statements that were made." So 40 cents' worth of postage multiplied by the number of employees, saying, "Oops, we shouldn't have said what we said." That's not really any kind of hammer that's being held over the head to make sure that you're not interfering in the rights of an individual that's trying to organize into a bargaining unit.

Why do we not have automatic certification anymore? Surely to goodness, when a group of workers get together and say, "We want to be part of a collective bargaining unit," they ought to have the right to make that determination on their own, free from the influence of their employer. But that's not at all the case.

Do you recall, Mr. Speaker, that the last time, I believe, that we had an automatic certification under the old legislation was at the Mariposa store in West Edmonton Mall. Absolute employer interference in the unionized drive. Workers got together and had a majority sign up, and what happened? The working conditions of the women that were working out in those stores were arbitrarily changed. Women that were working full-time were suddenly working part-time. Some of them weren't even called in at all. Some women that were supposed to be there as sales service people were told that they were now responsible for cleaning shelves, while at the same time they had another employee in there selling. Those that were still designated salespeople were responsible for stocktaking, for cleaning. They weren't allowed to service people as they came in, but they still had a sales quota.

MR. NELSON: What a bunch of crap.

4:40

MR. SIGURDSON: The Member for Calgary-McCall says, "What a bunch of crap." Is that parliamentary? I don't know, but it's in the record now.

You know, I'll tell you. Even the Labour Relations Board, Mr. Speaker . . .

Speaker's Ruling Parliamentary Language

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, I believe that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Belmont has put that really unparliamentary word into the record. I think he may be good at reading lips, but I don't think the hon. member should really put language like that . . .

MR. SIGURDSON: Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you. [interjections] Well, if others . . . You know, I admire the determination of some of the Member for Calgary-McCall's colleagues in the back bench saying that they didn't hear it.

AN HON. MEMBER: I didn't hear it.

MR. SIGURDSON: That's fine. That's fine.

MR. McINNIS: We all heard it.

MR. SIGURDSON: Some members on this side of the House happened to hear the statement. Mr. Speaker, if you find the expression offensive, sir, I will withdraw it, because I find the expression rather offensive too.

Debate Continued

MR. SIGURDSON: I'll tell you what. More important than my finding that expression offensive, more important than the expression itself being offensive, is the fact that the workers, the workers at the Mariposa store who are still working in places throughout Alberta, will find the comment more offensive than the exact comment itself.

Mr. Speaker, all of a sudden these people were assigned

different duties but still had sales quotas. They couldn't meet the sales quotas because of the new duties that they were assigned. There was an impediment put in their way, too many hurdles for them to jump over, and they were fired. The Labour Relations Board said: "Wait a second. That's an unfair labour practice. You're certified." I'll tell you, quite frankly, the story goes from bad to worse, because ultimately what happened is that after a delay of a long period of time those workers, due to pressure that was not at all necessary on the part of the employer, eventually left, an application for decertification was made, and an application for decertification was granted.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, workers are tired of that. They're tired of that kind of intimidation, and it's still going on. It's still going on because we have this labour relations Act that is in desperate and dire need of being corrected, at least so that workers have the opportunity to make choice.

So, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what Bill 211 attempts to do. It quite frankly makes it easier for workers to make that choice, and isn't it about time? There are times even recently when . . . The Canadian Paperworkers Union tried to get the workers in Grande Prairie into their bargaining unit, without success. The Engine Rebuilders in Edmonton had a lot of initial interest at sign-up, and a document was circulated by an Alvin Morris that said why we don't need the union. Who's Alvin Morris? The owner of the company, I'm told. What happened? The document was rather intimidating. The union lost. There was a time, I'm told, that employees of Innova envelope company in Edmonton had virtually a 100 percent sign-up. One hundred percent sign-up; the employees supported the union drive. What happened? The intimidation that went on was so great, and the employer actually realized that the intimidation was so great and was going to be challenged that the employer went to the Labour Relations Board and said, "Look, before you charge me, I'm guilty." The employer sent out a letter saying, "Oops, I was wrong." The union was allowed to have an in-house meeting at the plant, but you know what happened? The intimidation that the employer was allowed under this Act to have was so great that even though virtually 100 percent of the employees had signed up at the plant, when it came to a vote, the vote was lost. Why?

If the Minister of Labour is going to be able to respond at all to this, I want to put to the Minister of Labour: why is it that when you have greater than the majority of the employees signed up, why do you still have to have a vote for certification? Surely to goodness, Mr. Speaker, if we in this Assembly had to look at our last election results and find who had 50 percent plus 1, all of a sudden this Assembly would shrink mightily. If this government had to wait . . . [interjection] Oh, let me tell you, it wouldn't just be Ontario. If this government had to rely on 50 percent of the support of the electorate, do you know what?

MS BARRETT: They'd be defeated.

MR. SIGURDSON: They'd be defeated. In the last election, in the 1989 election, this government received less than 50 percent of the vote, and it still has the power to govern because it has more seats than the other two parties combined. That's a democratic process.

MR. WEISS: What percentage did you get in your riding?

MR. SIGURDSON: Oh, let me tell you. The hon. Minister of Career Development and Employment asks me what percent I had in my riding. I'm not sure of the exact percent. It was certainly less than 50 percent, and I'm here to represent my constituents. I am here, and I am here on that basis.

But you know what? The rules that apply to the Members of this Legislative Assembly, the rules that apply to a democratically elected government are not extended to workers at the worksite. If you've got 51 percent of the workers signed up, do you get automatic certification? No. What about at 60 percent? Would anybody across the way like to hazard a guess at what percent of sign-up you get automatic certification? Not even, Mr. Speaker, with 100 percent of the employees supporting the unionized drive do you get a certification. This government that so wants to be out of the lives of Albertans . . .

MR. CARDINAL: Why don't you talk about Al-Pac, about the jobs?

MR. SIGURDSON: I'm sticking to the Bill. The Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche wants to chatter away.

MR. CARDINAL: You don't want the jobs at Al-Pac. Talk about Al-Pac and the jobs, right? Any jobs you guys don't want . . .

MR. SIGURDSON: They're unionized. [interjections] I tell you, Mr. Speaker . . .

4:50

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. [interjections] Order.

MR. SIGURDSON: Oh, the cage has been rattled a little bit, Mr. Speaker.

You know, even if you've got 100 percent of the workers signed up . . .

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Smoky River. Order please.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: I wonder if the hon. member would entertain a question.

MR. SIGURDSON: At the end of my remarks I would, yes. Thank you. I'm learning well from the Member for Red Deer-North.

Even if you've got 100 percent of the workers signed up on the union card and they've paid their \$2 – which, incidentally, my amendment says you don't have to pay – if they've done all of that, this government that says we want to get government out of the lives of Albertans still, like Big Brother, wants to have a supervised vote. Don't you trust the people? Don't you trust people who have signed a membership card and have paid their money? Isn't that good enough? If you put your signature to a contract that says, "I'm involved," isn't that good enough? You still have to have a vote? Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you, it's good enough for me. When you've got the majority plus 5 percent, as my amendment proposes, 55 percent of the workers at the particular worksite signed up on a union card, I think that's good enough to get the certification.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to deal with a particular section of the Act that I think it's time to send out to the scrap heap as well. That's that section that deals with a worker having to pay \$2 when they sign a card. Now, that \$2 payment has been in a previous labour code and codes before that. I don't think, sir, it's necessary at all for workers to have to pay that \$2. Why? It's not a fantastic sum of money. It's not as though it's going to show a great amount of commitment. Two dollars won't even buy you half of a package of cigarettes today.

MR. DAY: It won't even buy you a Liberal membership.

MR. SIGURDSON: It would buy a lot of Liberal memberships; you're right.

But \$2 when you put your signature to a card really doesn't mean all that much. I would tell you, quite frankly, that the signature means an awful lot more than the \$2 bill that may be handed over. I'm sure that if any member across the way were to put their signature to documents that made commitments, you wouldn't have to say, "Well, here's \$2 to make sure I live up to it." I would hope that the signature you affix to any document would mean more than a simple payment of \$2. Surely to goodness, it's about time we got rid of having to have a \$2 payment that goes along with the commitment that's made by a signature.

Mr. Speaker, workers in Alberta should be able to make choices free from interference, free from the influence of their employers. A trade union doesn't belong to the employer. There are employer organizations that employers belong to, and it's in their best interests to join those employer organizations. Employees should be able to have their organizations as well so that when they collectively come together and put up their demands prior to going into negotiations, they do so as a collective trying to better their lot in life, trying to get their demands across collectively. So a trade union, when it starts off by signing up members, should most certainly be free of the influence of the employer at the sign-up, whether the employer is in favour of the sign-up drive or opposed. That's why we propose in Bill 211, in the Act to amend the labour code, bringing back the automatic certification for an unfair labour practice.

You know, Mr. Speaker, since the passage of the Labour Relations Code in 1988, the Labour Relations Board has had to deal with very few employer interventions at a certification hearing. Can you imagine? Prior to 1988, when there was sufficient sign-up and you would go before the Labour Relations Board to see whether everything was in order, there were any number of employers that would come forward and say: "Well, wait a minute. We want to argue about the number of employees. We want to argue about whether or not this person should be included in the bargaining unit; they ought to be included in management."

Those kinds of interventions were made before the board, but you know, Mr. Speaker, now those interventions are very few and far between. The reason that they're so few and far between is because they have all the time in the world after an organization drive starts. It goes on for up to 90 days, and once that 90-day period is over, there's a couple of weeks where, after the application is made, you have the opportunity to speak with your employees and tell them: "Boy, oh, boy. You know, if we get a union in here, we're shutting down. If we get a union in here, some of the conditions of work are going to change. If we get a union in here, the treatment that you've been getting over the course of time is certainly going to change." All of a sudden,

when you've got that kind of wonderful communication and intimidation that's going on, you find that some of the employees are saying: "Well, gosh; you know, I still have to work here afterwards. I still have to deal with this character in his misery. Therefore, when it comes to a vote, maybe we'll give the old person another chance, and we'll vote in his favour and not vote with the union even though we've signed a card." That's the kind of interference that really ought to be prohibited. There ought to be provision in the Act that provides that when you get that kind of interference, there's an automatic certification.

The labour code should be for workers, workers that should have some rights, and employers should also have some rights. You replace it with the appeal process back at the Labour Relations Board so that employers still have the right to appeal, and you get into that argumentative process, but at least, Mr. Speaker, you find that when an employee or employees start an organization, it's free from the influence and free from the intimidation that is now being exercised out there. We've got to make sure or at least we should be wanting to make sure in this Assembly that the organizations that are placed in the best interests of working Albertans should be there for them to control and nobody else. Nobody else.

So, Mr. Speaker, with those comments I'd gladly entertain a question from the Member for Smoky River.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: I noted the statements that were made regarding the plurality of 51 percent, that this government would indeed not be in power. I wanted to question the research that the hon. member had conducted on that and if he would share with the House just what his references are regarding this rather interesting information, because it doesn't quite follow the information that I have.

MR. SIGURDSON: The 1989 election results clearly show that the governing party didn't enjoy greater than 50 percent of the popular vote, while it certainly, without any doubt, returned 59 of the 83 seats that constitute the majority to form a government. However, Mr. Speaker, if you had to form a government based on the majority of the electorate, then this government wouldn't have formed a government in the 1989 results. It would have in '86 by a slim majority.

Speaker's Ruling Repeated Questions

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. I understand that repeated questions are not really dealt with in Standing Orders or in *Beauchesne*. I think, however, the Assembly perhaps has to weigh the right of the next member wishing to speak.

I would recognize the Member for Banff-Cochrane.

5:00 Debate Continued

MR. EVANS: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker, and with all due respect to the hon. Member for Smoky River, I won't ask a supplemental.

I would, however, like to make a few comments on Bill 211, and I welcome this opportunity to rise and participate in the debate. I would like to be in a position to say that this type of a Bill to amend the Labour Relations Code is a first for this Legislative Assembly, but unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, in one form or another we've seen similar attempts by the opposition to undermine the Labour Relations Code in the recent past. To refresh their minds, I'd like to point to Bill 214, Bill 236, Bill

204, Bill 217, and now a mere half a year later we have before us Bill 211.

Albeit that the Member for Edmonton-Belmont's comments were rather wide-ranging and, quite frankly, a little bit hard to focus on what he brought forward, I will try to address some of the things that I've picked up from the Bill and relate them back to the Labour Relations Code that we have as legislation in this province.

In terms of the sheer numbers of the Bills that the opposition has brought forward, those who read *Hansard* and those who might be sitting in the gallery today would come to a sense that Alberta's labour laws are not cutting it. I believe that this is exactly what the member would have us believe, but it is not the case. This is leading Albertans astray if this is what the hon. member is trying to bring forward to this Assembly. I'm going to argue the other side of the coin, Mr. Speaker.

I see this Bill before us today as yet another red herring attempt. It's an attempt by the Member for Edmonton-Belmont and the opposition to make political hay out of what I think is very much an incomplete and, I would venture to say, an ill-conceived Bill. Time and time again, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has argued about the evils – his alleged evils, his perceived evils – of Alberta's labour laws. Indeed, the New Democrats have been crying this same scenario, have been crying this same tune since the new Labour Relations Code was passed in 1988. They have argued that Alberta would have substantial and widespread labour unrest, but I ask all hon. members: is this the truth? The answer is no, quite the opposite.

I'd like to quote an interesting statistic for the record. The number of applications to unionize has not dropped off. In fact, there were 251 certification bids in 1990 as compared to 193 in 1988 and 215 in 1987. Moreover, regarding replacement workers, which was the subject of this member's last Bill, predictions that strikes would become more violent and frequent under the new code simply have not come true. Why haven't these predictions come true, Mr. Speaker? Why does the Member for Edmonton-Belmont keep trying to lead Albertans away from the truth about our labour laws?

Alberta does clearly have some of the best labour legislation in Canada. Our current legislation wasn't developed in a vacuum. It was arrived at after extensive public consultation, extensive public review. It would seem that the member opposite is prepared to ignore that public review in his attempt to discredit the Labour Relations Code. It seems to me that the member opposite has just taken out a couple of sections from the code, phrases that he doesn't like, and he's tried to replace them with his own perceived improvements. I'd like to talk about a couple of the things that he's proposing to change.

One area of change that appears to me to be quite peculiar is his alteration of the preamble. Now, I am very supportive of preambles as a means of giving general intent to a piece of legislation. I think they certainly have their place, but they're not intended to be a road map as to how a piece of legislation should be dealt with. It's not intended to be the important and substantive provisions in a piece of legislation. Now, the hon. member has, for the benefit of *Hansard* and for the benefit of those who are not in possession of a copy of his Bill, read into *Hansard* the proposed preamble that he is suggesting in his Bill. I'm sure that the hon. member would give me a similar courtesy for the same audience, to read in the current preamble. I trust, Mr. Speaker, that you would allow me that courtesy. I'll be brief.

Whereas it is recognized that a mutually effective relationship between employees and employers is critical to the capacity of

Albertans to prosper in the competitive world-wide market economy of which Alberta is a part; and

Whereas it is fitting that the worth and dignity of all Albertans be recognized by the Legislature of Alberta through legislation that encourages fair and equitable resolution of matters arising in respect of terms and conditions of employment; and

Whereas the employee-employer relationship is based on a common interest in the success of the employing organization, best recognized through open and honest communication between affected parties; and

Whereas employees and employers are best able to manage their affairs where statutory rights and responsibilities are clearly established and understood; and

Whereas it is recognized that legislation supportive of free collective bargaining is an appropriate mechanism through which terms and conditions of employment may be established.

Now, I must say, Mr. Speaker, that *Hansard* will not record where I have attempted to give emphasis to provisions in that preamble. Again, I think it's important that some of that emphasis be pointed out to the hon. member and to those in the Assembly. The first paragraph talks about a "mutually effective relationship." The second talks about "worth and dignity," encouraging "fair and equitable resolution of matters arising in respect of . . . employment." The third paragraph: "the employee-employer relationship . . . based on a common interest . . . open and honest communication." I'll just move down to the last paragraph: "legislation supportive of free collective bargaining."

Now, again, Mr. Speaker, given that a preamble sets a general tone, I think some of the comments that the hon. member has made previously about the perceived, in his view, shortcomings of the preamble in the labour code are just untrue. They are unfounded. I think this preamble sets out the philosophy of the government of the province of Alberta and recognizes the importance of that relationship between employers and employees. If that relationship is not established, then we will have the chaos, we will have the strife, we will have the animosity that the hon. member has claimed previously and, I think, suggested today that we would have on the labour market scene.

If the hon. member is suggesting that by including the words "freedom of association," the trade unionists hope to establish their right to a strike, then he's sadly mistaken. The courts in this land have already determined that the term "freedom of association" doesn't imply the right to strike.

5:10

I'm afraid, Mr. Speaker, that redundancies unfortunately continue through this Bill 211. Sections 51(1)(b.1) and 61.1(1) are already dealt with under the current legislation. For example, 51(1)(b.1) is unnecessary because the Labour Relations Board already investigates issues such as unfair pressure by the employer against an employee. There is a mechanism for redressing what the hon. member has alluded to as justification for his 55 percent rule. Another major flaw in the Bill that I'd like to point out is the fact that while it purports to improve the spirit of co-operation and goodwill which must characterize the collective bargaining process, many of these proposed changes in fact undermine the same ideals. For example, sections 37.1(1), 149(d), and sections 157 through 159 all make reference to policies which if instituted would create strife between the employee and the employer. Instead of conflict resolution, these suggested amendments would create conflict. I firmly believe that, and, hon. member, I hope you'll reconsider those provisions.

Section 149(d) will permit trade unions or their representatives to have access to employees during their normal break periods without prior approval from the employer. Now, this could cause an unnecessary interruption in business operations in addition to being disconcerting to both employers and employees. We must realize, Mr. Speaker, that efficiency and dedication at the workplace are critical if we are to compete on a global scale, and without maintaining and improving that competitive edge, our industries in this province will at best falter and more likely collapse. That, of course, will do no one in this province any good. That will create unemployment; that will create emotional strife. This is something we have got to avoid. We have got to ensure that we do not allow that kind of a process to occur.

Sections 157 to 159 raise the amount of fines for contravening the code. Now, it's the belief of this government, Mr. Speaker, that communication and goodwill are preferable for successful collective bargaining as opposed to the threat of heavy fines, as the Member for Edmonton-Belmont would have. Again, this pressure to have additional fines and this focus that I think the Member for Edmonton-Belmont has are consistent with an adversarial approach. It's not consistent with mediation; it's not consistent with resolution of issues that legitimately would arise between employers and employees.

Mr. Speaker, all of the other proposed changes are similar insofar as they appear to me to be unnecessary. Therefore, I'd like to turn to some of my specific objections to the Bill.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

As I've already stated and illustrated, many of the proposed amendments are redundant and would undermine the spirit of co-operation and goodwill which characterizes the current Labour Relations Code. Of equal importance, some sections of Bill 211 would compromise the effectiveness of the legislation. Sections 30.1, 31(a)(ii), 31.1: all three could result in a trade union choosing to represent a group of employees based solely on numerical support without any criteria or Labour Relations Board involvement. Attention to these factors, Mr. Speaker, is crucial as the Labour Relations Board determines if the unit is appropriate for collective bargaining, and the proposal to certify unions without a vote providing that 55 percent of the employees initially have supported the concept of a union is frightening to me in its implications.

On the one hand, the member is saying we must provide for the trade union and its representatives to have free and unencumbered access to the labour force and to then sign up as many as they wish. On the other hand, the member is saying that the time-honoured process that we all stand for in this House, the ability to vote by secret ballot, should be eliminated. This seems very, very peculiar to me, to say the least, and I think shows that the member had not taken the time – to be charitable – that I think is necessary to consider all of the implications of his proposals.

Secret ballot representative votes are mandatory, and they allow for a free choice by employees to be certified or not to be certified by a union. I agree that there should be no preference given to the employer, but by the same token there should be no preference given to the trade union which is trying to get a bargaining unit certified. There must be equality on both sides so that the employee is free to make that kind of a decision.

I'm disappointed to note that this Bill seems to have been poorly thought out. The section calling for the abolition of the

\$2 individual fee to join a union, when you think about it, is totally unsupportable and is somewhat consistent with the position that the Liberal Party has taken with respect to their party memberships. I wonder whether this ill-thought-out concept has been approved now by the Member for Edmonton-Belmont. I must ask the rhetorical question, Mr. Speaker: if we are not to charge a \$2 fee, then what about union dues? Certainly union dues are substantial. If a \$2 fee shouldn't be charged, then I think we better look at whether union dues themselves should be a part of the trade union process.

Again, Mr. Speaker, this Bill seems to reject the extensive public consultation process that comprised the very serious re-examination of our labour laws. Instead, this Bill, if passed, will peck away at a good piece of legislation that takes into consideration the concerns of both labour on the one hand and management on the other hand, and I think it takes it into consideration in a very balanced and reasonable manner. Once again I suspect that the member has been rather cavalier in his approach to this serious subject, and for these reasons I cannot support Bill 211 as it is put before us today.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The previous speaker refers to the Labour Relations Code as a "good piece of legislation." Unfortunately, I beg to differ. I think there is no doubt that the Labour Relations Code has created difficulties in the past and unless amended, eliminated, scrapped, recycled, or otherwise altered, as suggested by the Member for Edmonton-Belmont, we shall indeed have some problems in the future. I think that probably the best approach to the Labour Relations Code would not be to amend it as suggested by the Member for Edmonton-Belmont but simply to scrap it and start over again.

The process by which the Labour Relations Code originally was created, Mr. Speaker, was in itself a bit of a farce. We had the former Member for West Yellowhead traveling not only around this province but around the world, with an entourage of 25 people, at thousands of dollars of expense, to find out what Albertans supposedly wanted. He didn't listen to Albertans but traveled all around. Then when they produced something, they didn't produce something that Albertans wanted in the first place. That, I think, in itself is the major flaw with the Labour Relations Code as it originally was created.

5:20

The purpose of Bill 211, as presented by the Member for Edmonton-Belmont, is to strengthen the rights of workers. One of the problems with the current Labour Relations Code is that it works in favour of the employers rather than the employees. In order for there to be harmony between employers and employees, we need to have that free collective bargaining process. Now, there is in the preamble as proposed by the Member for Edmonton-Belmont the phrase "free collective bargaining," and as it currently exists, there is that same phrase. But, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately that's not the case. We don't always have a free collective bargaining process because part of the problem is that the government likes to hold the big club, the big stick.

You know, one of the most, I think, upsetting times, difficult times for people is when they end up on strike, and even more difficult and more upsetting is when they end up in a position where they have to take a strike despite the fact legislation tells

them they may not be allowed to do so. I think back, Mr. Speaker, to 1988. You probably recall the animosity and the fears of the nurses at that time. The hospital workers under the Labour Relations Code are not allowed to strike. That anger was very clear to members of this Legislature, and it was clear to me before I became a member of the Legislature that people were not happy, were not going to sit back and accept the Labour Relations Code. Despite the fact that they knew they were doing something wrong – as far as the law is concerned, that is; not morally but as far as the law is concerned. They were in fact breaking the law. You know, that simply, to my mind, showed the concern, the anger, the fear that they had and the strength of the conviction of the position that they held.

I think what we need to do in amending the Labour Relations Code is to strike a better balance. That balance needs to give an equal chance for both the employers on one hand and the employees on the other hand to engage in a free collective bargaining process.

Now, the Member for Banff-Cochrane was concerned, for example, about the fines that were being proposed in sections 157 to 159. I think we have to deal with the fact that sometimes the big club being in the hand of government is an awfully big club. We need to get something that gives the workers, the employees, a bit of a club too. One of the problems is that very often you get an employer who's got a lot of political clout, a lot of economic clout, and really holds the workers almost to ransom at times. We've seen that in many instances. The near riots, or perhaps they were large enough to be classified as riots, with the Gainers strike here in Edmonton clearly shows that you can have some problems with the Labour Relations Code. No doubt about it, there is a need to amend this particular piece of legislation.

When we look at the proposed amendments by the Member for Edmonton-Belmont, we start at the beginning with the preamble. I must confess I'm not convinced that that's the best place to begin in attempting to make changes, or proposed changes no doubt, to the Labour Relations Code. I appreciate the intent of the hon. member, and generally I must confess I am supportive of the direction of this Bill in an attempt to provide some balance. I think the strength that needs to be brought out, that maybe needs to be improved a little bit if we're going to start working at rearranging or rewording or adding to the preamble, Mr. Speaker, is to really strengthen the concept of the free collective bargaining process.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

I think when you cut aside all of the rhetoric, all of the legalities, all of the animosities and concerns that people have, they really want to know when they're sitting across the table from their counterpart – whether it's an employee or an employer they're looking at across the table – that they've got a fair shake. They want to know that they've got a fair chance in that when they rise from that table, both people are going to come away from the table winners. That's really what it's all about. The employer wants to know that he or she can go away and can run the business and be successful and have a viable enterprise that will help to diversify the economy, that will be an ongoing venture in the province. The employee, the worker, wants to have that too. That employee, he or she, wants to have the opportunity to have a fair wage, to have fair working conditions. If changes need to be implemented, those changes are negotiated on a fair and open basis between the employee and the employer. We're not going to have surprises; we're not

going to have somebody coming in from left field and saying, "We're going to change this on you right now, and we really don't care what your viewpoints are."

So I think if we're going to change the preamble, we need to look at perhaps talking a little more about that free collective bargaining process, the opportunity for equal input, not just a one-sided input from one side of the negotiating table but from both sides, that they both have an opportunity.

When we look a little further on – the Labour Relations Code of course is a fairly lengthy piece of legislation – I think we have to look at a variety of other changes that could be proposed in there. When we look at the definitions, for example, the Member for Edmonton-Belmont proposes that we change the definition for a collective agreement. It says in the proposed Bill 211, Mr. Speaker, that

"collective agreement" means an agreement in writing between an employer or an employer's organization and a bargaining agent . . . [containing] terms and conditions of employment.

Well, again we need to look at putting a little more detail in there in terms of dealing with the employee's side. We have to talk about not just unions but also people who may be working for an employer in a non-union arrangement. I'm not suggesting that unions are something that we should either support or work to dismantle, but I think we need to look at how we can best arrange for those fair negotiations that I talked about, that equitable negotiating practice between both employer and employee to occur. So we need to broaden that definition. If we're going to start looking at some of these definitions, we need to look at a variety of different working situations, working

conditions under which we get that relationship between an employer and an employee.

Again, I think the intent proposed by the Member for Edmonton-Belmont is good. I think we have a start here with proposed changes being made, but I think what we need to do is look at a little bit broader definition, perhaps adding in a variety of different things. For example, "trade union" is one of the definitions referred to, and we need to look at that particular definition as well, Mr. Speaker, and ask ourselves if we really just want to restrict ourselves to the definition proposed here.

So what we're looking at is really a process to improve the means by which trade unions can become certified. I think that is a good direction for this Bill to be taking, but again there are some loopholes, I think some things that aren't quite clear that I would like to have the opportunity to debate with the member more . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Forgive me, hon. member. Thank you. Five-thirty has arrived.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, then I'll move . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Take your place, please, hon. member. [interjection] Sorry. Sorry. Perhaps you'd like to review the Blues as to something that was read into the record earlier today.

[The Assembly adjourned at 5:30 p.m.]

